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Truth is a mighty power—a lie may keep it in the background and hide it; but it cannot be blotted out.

—PETRARCH.

Letting out the Truth.

TRUTH, like murder, will out. Buried to-day, it rises from its grave to-morrow. Unable to make itself felt in one form, it assumes another. The most powerful churches and governments cannot permanently suppress it. The most energetic liar cannot avoid occasionally giving it voice. A far greater amount of watchfulness is required to avoid telling the truth than is needed to avoid telling a lie. Few men, indeed, are clever enough to be *always* telling lies. From sheer exhaustion of their inventive power they drop into the truth, and are then probably surprised to discover how much more interesting, instructive, and, in the deeper sense, profitable it is.

The other day, England's Grand Old Showman, General Booth, reached his eighty-first birthday. Although an out and out believer in the Bible, he has distanced the allotted age of man by eleven years, and the transgression sits lightly on his conscience. To the readers of the *Daily Chronicle* he sent a "special message," and although his messages usually play on the one string of subscriptions to the Army's funds, in this instance his favorite topic was neglected. Perhaps, being eighty-one, he thought that he and his readers deserved a change. Indeed, he expressly said that if you want to save men don't "merely pity them or pray for them"; and with this we quite agree. Pity, or what passes for such, is very often a purely selfish indulgence, and even more often something of an insult to the object of it. And to pray for anyone is a sure sign of imbecility or impertinence. If you want to save people, said General Booth,—

"you must go about the work in a business like fashion. Select your individual, study his habits, find out the road to his rescue; go for him with all your heart, and never despair till you are crowned with success. Then inspire the person you have dragged from destruction with the same benevolent spirit."

Now this, in a general way, is good advice, and it illustrates what we have said about the unconquerableness of truth. For no one has talked more than General Booth about the power of Christ, the efficacy of the blood, and the helplessness of man without the gospel of Christian salvation. But in this advice no dependence whatever is placed on the "blood," the "power of the Lord," or upon any of the other religious shibboleths one associates with the Salvation Army. To all appearance, so far as this advice is concerned, General Booth might be as a level headed social worker, with no other object in view than the solution of an acute social problem, instead of the head of a huge religio-trading organisation living upon the sweated labor of the helpless, the fanaticism of the ignorant religious, securing a surreptitious support for a religious crusade by means of a widely advertised interest in social distress, the whole deriving its strength from the credulity and apathy of the general public.

We repeat, in this advice religion is conspicuously ignored. Time has brought its revenge, and the

sheer force of experience has compelled General Booth, in an unguarded moment, to let the cat out of the bag. We are to go about the work of helping our weaker brethren in a business like fashion, by studying their habits and finding out a road to their rescue. But, from the point of view of the Salvation Army religion, the business is simple. It is the "Gospel of Blood" that is all powerful, the prayer of the devout that is omnipotent. The man should be saved by religion. But to study each person's habits, to find out the special road that leads us to the inner side of an individual's character, to bring our own personal influence strongly and persistently to bear upon another, is an admission that religion offers no royal road to improvement. It becomes a social matter from beginning to end.

Now this, substantially, is what Freethinkers have all along pointed out is the case. When Christians have paraded their cases of conversion, of men being made better in their lives by the influence of other Christians, we have never denied the fact of such improvements, however much we have had to rectify the exaggerations of a heated religious imagination. But when we have been told that the improvement was to be attributed to Jesus Christ, or to the power of prayer, then we have been compelled to protest. We could see no evidence of the power of prayer, because the person prayed for always knew the person who was praying. We could see no proof of the presence of the "spirit of Christ," but there was a very tangible proof of one man trying to influence another. And in this way the remedies were necessarily—perhaps designedly—mixed. If a Christian wishes to prove that a man is made better by prayer, let him pray in his own room and without letting anyone know that he is praying. If he wishes to offer a really convincing proof of the power of Christ, let him dispense with all personal appeals, and then see what will happen.

The truth is, that improvement in character, so far as it is genuine and so far as it can be effected, is not specially associated with religion; it runs through the whole of life. There is not a workshop or an office or an association of human beings in the world in which someone is not being benefited by the well-directed efforts of others. These cases are not paraded upon public platforms, because apart from religion a sense of decency develops, and people prefer to bury their regrettable past rather than to live it over again in their imagination. People think much more of the opinion of their shopmates, their office companions, their neighbors, or their fellow-citizens than they do of the Holy Ghost, and are right in so thinking. For all character is a social product, and is made better or worse by our social surroundings.

When a religious person, or a number of such persons, get hold of a morally "lost" case, visit him, set a constant watch on him, keep his old evil acquaintances at arm's length, it is not religion that is to be credited with the improvement that may result, it is the new social environment into which he is raised that effects the change. It is the reaction of man on man that rouses the latent capacities of man into active operation. And we are glad to see General Booth, after so many years of teaching to the contrary, recognising, even inadvertently, this truth.

C.

Christianity a Corollary.

IT is not often that a clergyman of deep learning deliberately makes a present of his whole case to the enemy. As a rule, he makes the most he can of his case, much more than he is legitimately entitled to make. He generally endeavors to "make the worse appear the better reason." But Professor David Smith, of Londonderry, in the Correspondence Column of the *British Weekly* for April 14, gives the case for Christianity completely away. The article purports to be an answer to the question, "Was the primary object of Christ's coming into the world that of *saving men* or of *glorifying God*?" Dr. Smith claims that the two objects are inseparable. "He came to glorify God," he says, "by saving men." Then he adds: "The glory of God is his goodness; he is glorified in the salvation of sinners. This appears on every view of God." He then begins by viewing him as the Creator:—

"He created the world for his glory [cf. Rev. iv. 11]. And what is his glory? It is the perfection and blessedness of his creation. The sculptor's glory is the beauty of the breathing marble which his hands have fashioned; the architect's glory is the symmetry of the stately pile which his soul imagined and his fingers sketched. Sir Christopher Wren needs no monument. His cathedral is his monument, and his sufficient eulogy the legend, 'If you require a monument look around.' And God is the Architect of the Universe. He created the world, and it was 'all very good.' Then sin entered and marred his work. And what did he do? He would not lose his glory; so he set himself to repair the damage."

The last creative act was the making of man in the image and after the likeness of the Creator; and when the work was finished "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." But the verdict was premature. God was mistaken as to the quality of his work. All was not "very good." Indeed the masterpiece turned out a heart-breaking disappointment. Man, the only being created in the image and after the likeness of God, was so badly made that almost immediately provision had to be devised for making him over again by a different process. As the Professor says, God's "honor was at stake. He was like a good workman who takes a pride in his work and will not have it spoiled, who hates to waste material and will not endure the shame of beginning a task and leaving it incomplete, a monument of his incompetence, the jest of every beholder. Redemption is the corollary of Creation." This is a most astounding statement. It is a naïve admission that if God had not resolved to become a Redeemer, his supreme creative act would have been "a monument of his incompetence, the jest of every beholder." That is to say, the very idea of redemption is a positive proof of the terrible extent to which the work of creation had been bungled. The need of repairing any damage is a standing reproach to the Maker.

Dr. Smith passes on to view God as "the Moral Governor," whose glory ought to be "the peace and prosperity of his people." As creator, the Divine Being was a dismal failure, on the reverend gentleman's own showing. He made it possible for sin to enter and mar his work. He had barely completed the task when he had to "set himself to repair the damage," and he has been repairing it ever since. The truth is, that his Moral Government has been as conspicuous a failure as the creation. Not even Professor Smith has the temerity to assert that mankind are in the enjoyment of perfect peace and prosperity. He even grants that our national life stands in sore need of amelioration and purification. He acknowledges that there is "a dark background—our glittering gin palaces and their shivering victims, our squalid slums, the herding of our people in crowded cities that their mountains and glens may be the rich man's sporting ground." Indeed, the conditions of life are so fundamentally bad that "the wonder is that Socialism has not already swooped upon its prey." But is not the reverend

gentleman aware that in making such admissions he is discrediting the Divine government of the world? The existence of wrongs, grievances, and injustices is a damning indictment of "the Moral Governor." It is easy enough to say that "since God is the moral governor of the world, for his own glory and his great name's sake he seeks the salvation of men, and that he seeks the same end also because he is, in St. Chrysostom's favorite phrase, the Philanthropist—i.e., the Lover of Men"; but what is the use of *seeking* the salvation of men without *accomplishing* it? For six thousand years, according to the Bible, the Philanthropist has been attempting to "repair the damage"; and yet at this very hour it remains unrepaired.

Dr. Smith takes another step and views the Deity as "the Heavenly Father." "A father seeks the good of his two children for two reasons—because he loves them, and because he owes it to himself. It is a credit to him when they do well, and a shame to him when they do ill." That is true and beautifully put; and here comes the application: "There is encouragement in the thought that our salvation is a concern of God, that we do not simply appeal to his mercy, but that he owes it to his great name to do his utmost for every soul which he has created, and which exists within the compass of his government." But does Dr. Smith not see that in thus speaking he is demonstrating the absolute impotence of his Heavenly Father? Had God been a perfect Creator there would have been no damage to repair, or if there had been, an omnipotent and all-loving Heavenly Father would have finally repaired it millenniums ago. The fact that the damage is still unrepaired proves that the Moral Governor and the Heavenly Father are as consummate failures as the Creator was. And to call God a failure is equivalent to saying that he does not exist. A Supreme Being who cannot do things, or does them amiss, is an unthinkable absurdity. Thus Dr. Smith has forged three powerful and conclusive arguments in support of Atheism. A blundering Creator, an inefficient Moral Governor, and an impotent Heavenly Father, these of necessity spell no-God.

Let us plunge a little deeper into this momentous subject. Dr. Smith maintains that, "if it be asked why Christ came, it is all one whether the answer is 'To save men' or 'To glorify God';" but if men are not saved, God cannot be glorified. Now, according to the reverend gentleman, Christ came as the second person in the Holy Trinity, as a Divine Being in full possession of omnipotence. His humanity was a cloak which he wore for a specific object. The strange thing is, however, that this Divine Being, disguised as a man, could become the Savior only by dying on a cross and rising from the tomb and dramatically ascending to heaven. On the eve of the crucifixion he is represented as saying, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." Dr. Smith knows perfectly well that Christ has been as lamentable a failure as the Creator, the Moral Governor, and the Heavenly Father. It is on record that he was lifted up from the earth; but it is an incontrovertible fact that he has not succeeded in drawing the whole human race unto himself. The President of the United Methodist Connexion, the Rev. W. B. Lark, speaking at Burton-on-Trent recently, is reported in the *Burton Evening Gazette* as saying:—

"The great work to which Jesus Christ had called his Church was that of saving men, turning men from sin to God. Now to what extent was the Christian Church doing this work? Were there ever so many in this country outside the Christian Church as at the present time? Where were their conversions? Did they keep pace with the growth of the population?"

That was one way of saying that Christ is not at present justifying his name as Savior. The New Testament describes the Church as the body of Christ, as his instrument, his hands and feet; and as the Church's Head he sits on the right hand of the Father, "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named,

not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he [the Father] put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." But Mr. Lark, ignoring that gorgeous picture, mournfully confesses that today the Church lacks "the driving-power." In other words, Christ does not save men, does not glorify God, and has never justified his claim to Saviorhood.

Is it not now perfectly clear that the corollary of Creation is quite as disappointing as Creation itself? Is it not beyond dispute that the silence and inactivity of the Heavenly Father, and the powerlessness of Christ, practically demonstrate the non-existence of both? As a human institution, the Church has done marvels; but she has done them under false pretence, in a name which she has utterly disgraced, and by a power which she never possessed. The Church is unconsciously the most gigantic fraud earth has ever seen. We are often told that Christianity created the Church; but the truth is that the Church created Christianity, and it is this truth alone that accounts for the total failure of the latter. Thus we see that the corollary of Creation is as thoroughly mythical as Creation itself. Science can find no trace whatever of any creation. Even Sir Oliver Lodge holds the view that the Universe is eternal. Its forms vary, but its substance remains for ever the same. Neither beginning nor end comes within the purview of the scientist. What he perceives is endless change, which does not always mean progress. Time was when life was not, and it is now an established fact that the original life-forms were unorganised and simple in the extreme. Countless years passed before there was any sign of intelligence; and after the first intimations of it made their appearance, it was countless years more before it reached the human stage. Furthermore, it is an incontestable fact that the intelligence of primitive man was of an exceedingly low order, as is, indeed, that of a present-day savage. The same thing is true of the evolution of the moral sense. When man made his appearance, his moral sense was as crude and immature as his intelligence. Of sin, in the theological sense, science knows nothing. It is a certainty that it never "entered and marred" Nature's work. It is true that man often blunders through ignorance and lack of experience, and has to learn obedience by the things which he suffers, but it is not true that he ever fell from a higher to a lower state. His trend has been upwards from the very start. There has never occurred such a catastrophe as Genesis depicts.

We conclude, therefore, that with Creation vanishes the corollary of Creation; that with sin disappears the Savior from sin; and that with Christ the Deity makes his exit. We are left alone with ourselves in Nature's hands, to learn her secrets, and to obey her laws. Herein is life, the life which is life indeed.

J. T. LLOYD.

Puritanism and Progress.—II.

(Continued from p. 243.)

IN the light of Green's facts, and of what has been pointed out, his statement that "At the Restoration religious freedom seemed again to have been lost," is well nigh incomprehensible. As a matter of fact, it had never been gained. A man here and there may have pleaded for religious freedom in a fairly broad sense, but as the settled policy of a dominating party or of the State it had never existed. Nor does it exist even to-day. Puritanism as a ruling force was tried in England, in Geneva, in Scotland, and in certain American colonies. And it failed as decisively as any power ever failed. No country has been able to tolerate its rule for long. Sooner or later its jaundiced view of life, its narrowness, its opposition to the brighter and really better aspects of life,

alienated support and caused people to turn to any form of government that would cancel its oppressing and depressing control. And people do not lightly part with a thing of which the goodness is manifest. The difficulty is in getting a good thing established, not in maintaining it once it has demonstrated its worth.

At the close of his chapter on "Puritan England," Green remarks, "The whole history of English progress since the Restoration, on its moral and spiritual sides, has been the history of Puritanism." "Moral and spiritual" progress is a very elastic phrase, and one is in some doubt as to what is meant by it. Real moral progress Puritanism does not further, as I hope to show later. And mental progress is equally foreign to its influence, as the whole history of England shows. Moreover, Green has himself admitted, in a sentence almost next to the one cited, that Puritanism threw back religious reform for a hundred years, although he accompanies it with the remark that it worked out its better influence through Wesley. But as abuses in any direction sooner or later generate protests, I do not see why any religious reform that may have been effected by Wesley can be attributed to a power that, when it was given the chance to express itself fully, worked for evil.

The best comment upon this remark of Green's is to take his own statement of post Restoration England. A deep and lasting change in the temper of the people, he says, marked the return of Charles the Second. The influences hitherto at work "suddenly lost power over the minds of men." England becomes a country—

"whose chief forces are industry and science, the love of popular freedom, and of law,.....which presses forward to a larger social justice and equality, and which tends more and more to bring every custom and tradition, religious, intellectual, and political to the test of pure reason. *Between modern thought.....and the thought of men before the Restoration there is a great gulf fixed.* A political thinker in the present day would find it equally hard to discuss any point of statesmanship with Lord Borleigh or with Oliver Cromwell. He would find *no point of contact* between their ideas of national life or national welfare, their conception of government or the ends of government, their mode of regarding economical and social questions, and his own. *But no gulf of this sort parts us from the men who followed the Restoration.*"

I have italicised certain expressions in this quotation in order to bring out the more clearly the irreconcilable contradiction between this summary and the preceding statement that we owe our progress to Puritanism. And if we are to accept the statements that modern England really begins with the Restoration, and that its modernity is of such a nature that a "great gulf" stands between that and the Puritan period, while the political and social ideals of the two periods are such that "no point of contact" exists between them; if, further, the modern ideal is to bring everything before the bar of reason, while the Puritan ideal was to try everything, even reason itself, by the Bible, if the chief forces in the modern period are industry and science, and in the preceding period, religion, what reasonable thing is meant by attributing modern progress to Puritanism? Does it not rather look as though modern progress depended upon the success with which Puritanism was kept subordinate to the newer and more progressive conception of social life?

That Puritanism in England broke down because of its own inherent weakness and unsuitability, in still further contradiction of his eulogy of it, is also pointed out by Green, and so removes the necessity of quoting from other authorities. The great mass of the people, it must always be borne in mind, were neither extremely pious nor extremely irreligious. They cared for neither the extravagancies of Puritans nor Royalists. All they desired was what the bulk of a people always desire—opportunity to lead a decent existence which should yield a moderate amount of pleasure, even though accompanied by certain small and not unendurable vices. Socially, existence to

this class had been made unendurable. Not only was horse-racing, cock-fighting, bull and bear-baiting suppressed—not, as Macaulay reminds us, because it hurt the animal, but because it pleased the man—but it was a mark of popish superstition to dance round a maypole, to adorn a house at Christmas with holly or ivy, and even to eat a mince-pie. Politically, the way to employment or promotion lay through the narrow gate of Puritan religious belief. Parliament resolved to employ none but such as should satisfy the House of their "real godliness"—a condition of things that strengthened bigotry and increased hypocrisy. Religion was made hateful even to the religious; it became synonymous with hypocrisy and repression. Puritanism, elevated to power and uncontrolled by a secular power, made for neither political, social, nor moral sanity. Charles II. had, during his exile, no surer advocates for his return than the Puritan rulers of England.

All this is emphasised by Green, as it is, indeed, by all who study the Puritan movement, except our modern Nonconformists. Green points out that at the Restoration Puritanism was both politically and socially bankrupt.

"The children, even of the leading Puritans, stood aloof from Puritanism.....Cromwell himself, in his later years, felt bitterly that Puritanism had missed its aim. He saw the country gentleman alienated from it by the despotism it had brought in its train..... He saw the growth of a dogged resistance in the people at large.....It broke down before the indifference and resentment of the great mass of the people.....It broke down, too, before the corruption of the Puritans themselves. Even amongst the really earnest Puritans prosperity disclosed a pride, a worldliness, a selfish hardness which had been hidden in the hour of persecution."

For the real elements of the progress that England was to achieve one has to look in other directions and to other forces than those of Puritanism. With the downfall of the Puritan régime the dead hand of the past, if not entirely removed, was robbed of much of its weight. Constitutional issues were, for the future at least, fought out upon a secular basis, even though the results were not always to be admired. Disintegrating criticism of religion, partly checked by the Protestant movement as a whole, and still further frustrated by Puritanism, began again in the Deistic controversy, which a little more than a century later began to assume its final phase in a definitely Freethought and Atheistic campaign. The theatres, which had been closed, were reopened, and if the Restoration drama contains material that is morally reprehensible, much of the fault has to be ascribed to the Puritanism which had, by its attitude, accentuated the features it deprecated. Literature, which had also suffered both by the general spirit of intolerance and a repressive censorship—even Milton's writings suffered in this last respect—revived, and began to play its part in the humanisation of life. With a few—very few—exceptions, no work of first-class genius saw the light from the beginning of the Long Parliament until the Restoration. And, in considering the moralising forces of life, art and literature usually play a much larger part than superficial observers imagine.

More striking still was the flood of intellectual activity that the downfall of Puritanism appeared to liberate. The Puritan temper, its readiness to see the "hand of God" in all that occurred, its dependence upon the Bible, the impetus it gave to such superstitions as that of witchcraft, was necessarily fatal to free scientific development. During the supremacy of Puritanism, England lagged behind Italy and France in scientific matters. The Restoration—or, at least, the waning power of Puritanism—coincided with an increase in the taste for scientific pursuits. A handful of scientific men founded the Royal Society, and, under the direct patronage of the king, science became the fashion. Halley and Flamsteed are names of this period that stand out in the history of astronomy. Sydenham is equally potent in the history of medicine. Wilkins founded the science of philosophy. Ray placed zoology on a

scientific basis. Barrow, Hooke, Willoughby, Woodward, Wallis, are the names of men to whom the intellectual history of the world owes much. Above all, it is the period of Sir Isaac Newton, whose discovery of universal gravitation dates from 1666, although not verified by himself for some years later. Newton's theorising would have received scant grace under Puritan rule. Even as it was, in a much more liberal period, it did not escape the charge of being an Atheistic theory.

Let any serious student of historic evolution consider the bearing of all the important discoveries made by these men on life, and then put to himself the question, To whom do we owe the most—to the narrow, fanatical Puritanism that England had learned to loathe, or to those who enlarged man's outlook on the world, and placed within his hands a weapon, the wielding of which constitutes a great, if not the greatest, difference between savagery and civilisation? Abused and misused the results of scientific activity may be, but in spite of this it remains the world's great civilising force. Even upon a comparatively low estimate the commercial and industrial developments of later years were dependent upon the advance of scientific research. What is, at first, a mere scientific toy, becomes ultimately a powerful implement for the furtherance of human welfare. Every discovery that has made man acquainted with the forces of nature has ended in making him, to the extent of his knowledge, nature's master.

Nor is it wise to overlook the moral benefits conferred upon man by scientific development. Not alone does the enlarging of knowledge, in itself, produce a moral reaction of no small value, but science acts as a moralising force in a deeper sense than is usually conceived. Morality is not a matter of theory, nor is it wholly, or even largely, a matter of conscious instruction. The general condition of our lives elevates or degrades it. The state of our blood, the tone of our nervous system, the sanitation of our houses and streets, have a more vital influence upon our moral character than have the exordiums of either preacher or moralist. And among the agencies that hasten the development of all those forces and conditions that unconsciously influence our moral growth, chief place must be given to that army of scientific workers whose motto is ever "to know," and who find the justification for their intellectual acquisitiveness in its influence for good upon the life of humanity.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Jesus as the World's Ideal.

"And as talents are various, so do moral natures vary, each having its own weak and strong side; and that one man [Jesus] should grasp into his single self the highest perfection of every moral kind, is to me at least as incredible as that one should preoccupy and exhaust all intellectual greatness."—PROFESSOR FRANCIS NEWMAN, *Phases of Faith*; 1891; p. 142.

"Is he the kindly, peaceful Christ depicted in the Catacombs? Or is he the stern Judge who frowns above the altar of SS. Cosmos and Damianus? Or can he be rightly represented by the bleeding ascetic, broken down by physical pain, of too many mediæval pictures? Are we to accept the Jesus of the second or the Jesus of the fourth Gospel as the true Jesus?"—PROFESSOR T. H. HUXLEY, *Science and Christian Tradition*; p. 229.

"I hope I shall offend no susceptibilities when I assert that this great and very definite personality [Jesus] in the hearts and imaginations of mankind does not and never has attracted me. It is a fact I record about myself without aggression or regret. I do not find myself able to associate Him in any way with the emotion of salvation."—H. G. WELLS, *First and Last Things*; 1908; p. 85.

CHRISTIANS, under the stress of modern scientific thought, are discarding the doctrines, dogmas, and miracles of their faith, and staking all on the personality of Jesus. He is held up for admiration, especially by the Nonconformists, as the highest ideal attainable by man—as the universal exemplar

for all nations, for all time. But this is merely the conceit of an arrogant creed. The Buddhist makes the same claim for Buddha, and the Mohammedan for Mahomet. The character of Jesus does not appeal to them, and the converts the missionaries boast of are recruited from the dregs of the populations of the East.

The late Professor Francis Newman has told us how, when he was a young man at Aleppo, he tried to convert a Mohammedan carpenter; the man waited patiently until he had finished his argument, and then replied:—

"I will tell you, sir, how the case stands. God has given you English a great many good gifts. You make fine ships, and sharp penknives, and good cloth and cottons; and you have rich nobles and brave soldiers; and you write and print many learned books [dictionaries and grammars]: all this is of God. But there is one thing that God has withheld from you, and has revealed to us; and that is, the knowledge of the true religion, by which one may be saved."*

Newman says: "I was silenced, and at the same time amused. But the more I thought it over, the more instruction I saw in the case. His position towards me was exactly that of a humble Christian towards an unbelieving philosopher." Just as a Salvationist would argue with a Huxley or a Tyndall. He adds: "though this rested in my memory, it was long before I worked out all the results of that thought."

Another earnest Christian had a still more disconcerting experience. Thomas Lumisden Strange, who became a Judge of the High Court of Madras, at one time had charge of an Indian gaol, a position involving attendance at the execution of criminals. He tells us:—

"I was then a devout Christian, and used to take advantage of my opportunities to bring the prisoners who were in these risks 'to Jesus.' They were ordinarily of the uneducated class, but one was otherwise, having been a servitor in a pagoda. He had professed himself influenced by what I had put before him, but when we met at the gallows he proclaimed his trust to be in Rāma, and not in Christ. He died earnestly calling upon his mediator and savior. What are we to say to such a phenomenon? Rāma's character is painted in the most exalted colors, and is described in a history considered to be an embodiment of divine truth. Rāma was a god incarnate, devoting himself for the good of mankind. What is there to induce a follower of his to relinquish him for just such another form presented to him from a foreign quarter?"†

Canon Barnett also testifies that the character of Jesus does not appeal to the Indians. He tells us that, although the missionaries are devoted and tell of his love and gentleness, dwelling on the womanly side of his character—

"The tale rouses little admiration, and among the few who become Christians there is not the ardent zeal of first converts. The fact is that the Indians are not rough and fierce barbarians; they have heard of love and sacrifice, and they are waiting, we who follow Christ may think, for another side—the masculine side of our Lord's character—to be preached. 'What puzzles me,' said a young Indian barrister, 'is how you English conquerors can worship a meek Christ.' He had not realised the Christ whom Cromwell and our fathers followed into battle."‡

This young Indian is not alone in being struck by the inconsistency of Christians, who worship a "Prince of Peace" and spend millions every year in preparation for war. And, we may add, it was not the sayings of Christ that inspired the soldiers of Cromwell. They drew their inspiration from the Psalms, which breathe out threatenings and slaughter on the enemies of the Lord, and from the battle scenes of the Old Testament. They compared their enemies to the Philistines and the Amalekites, while their own side, metaphorically, wielded "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

The Chinese, like the Indians, are equally unable to appreciate the teachings of Jesus. The Rev. E. J. Hardy, who was at one time Chaplain to the Forces at Hong Kong, tells us that it seems "foolishness" to them, as it did to the Greeks of old. He says: "To a missionary who had described the death of our Savior, a Chinese remarked, 'That Jesus plenty big fool.'"

At the time when the Japanese began to assimilate Western science they also considered the advisability of changing their religion, and, Christianity being the professed religion of the West, the Emperor of Japan appointed a Commission to inquire into its merits. They reported dead against it, and no change was made.

Even among those brought up to love and worship Jesus from earliest infancy, multitudes reject him as soon as they arrive at an age to think for themselves. A long list could be given of names distinguished in science, literature, and art of those who have done so; a glance at Mr. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers* will convince those who doubt it.

One of the latest avowals of inability to admit these claims made for Jesus as the universal ideal Savior is made by Mr. H. G. Wells, who writes with a desire to avoid offending religious susceptibilities, but who, we fear, must have very imperfect ideas on the subject if he thinks he has succeeded. He says:—

"Now the essential trouble of my life is its petty weaknesses. If I am to have that love, that sense of understanding fellowship, which is, I conceive, the peculiar magic and merit of this idea of a personal Savior, then I need someone quite other than this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean with his crown of thorns, his blood-stained hands and feet. I cannot love him any more than I can love a man upon the rack. Even in the face of torments I do not think I should feel a need for him."†

If Mr. Wells had set out with the express intention of offending religious susceptibilities, we can only wonder what the result would have been! The very fact of a man daring to dissent from Christianity is an offence to the Christian. The Rev. Dr. Wace told the late Professor Huxley that he was an "Infidel," and declared: "It is, and ought to be, an unpleasant thing for a man to have to say plainly that he does not believe in Jesus Christ." Professor Huxley, who, as he remarks somewhere, was not one of those who "suffer fools gladly," dealt faithfully with the reverend gentleman in the following trenchant reply:—

"Whether it is so depends, I imagine, a good deal on whether the man was brought up in a Christian household or not. I do not see why it should be 'unpleasant' for a Mohammedan or Buddhist to say so. But that it 'ought to be' unpleasant for any man to say anything which he sincerely, and after due deliberation, believes, is, to my mind, a proposition of the most profoundly immoral character. I verily believe that the great good which has been effected in the world by Christianity has been largely counteracted by the pestilent doctrine on which all the Churches have insisted, that honest disbelief in their more or less astonishing creeds is a moral offence, indeed a sin of the deepest dye, deserving or involving the same future retribution as murder and robbery. If we could only see, in one view, the torrents of hypocrisy and cruelty, the lies, the slaughter, the violation of every obligation of humanity, which have flowed from this source along the course of the history of Christian nations, our worst imaginations of Hell would pale beside the vision."‡

And as for being an "Infidel," it is "a term of reproach," says Huxley, "which Christians and Mahomedans, in their modesty, agree to apply to those who differ from them." And, he adds, "I do not care much what I am called by other people, and if I had at my side all those who, since the Christian era, have been called infidels by other folks, I could not desire better company. If these are my ancestors, I prefer with the old Frank, to be with them wherever they are."

* *Phases of Faith*; 1889; pp. 32-3.

† T. H. Strange, *The Sources and Development of Christianity*; 1875; pp. xiii., xiv.

‡ "Man, East and West," *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1892.

* E. J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*; 1905; p. 311.

† H. G. Wells, *First and Last Things*; 1908; p. 86.

‡ Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition*, pp. 240-1.

And what value is the example of Jesus to us? So far as we can gather from the Gospels, he never did a honest day's work in his life. As Professor Newman says, "That industry is a human duty cannot be gathered from his doctrine: how could it, when he kept twelve religious mendicants around him? No one who obeys him will long be able to keep property."* He declined the responsibilities and duties of married life, the corner stone of civilisation, and his example has been followed by multitudes of monks and hermits. Although slavery was rampant during his time, he never troubled to denounce it. "No word," says Renan, "occurs in all the ancient Christian literature to preach revolt to the slave."†

In adversity, Jesus displays no courage; at Gethsemane, in an agony of apprehension, he prays that the cup might pass from him; on the cross he cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" How different from the example of the heroic Giordano Bruno, the pioneer of Freethought in Europe. After lying in the dungeons of the Inquisition for seven years—while his enemies strove in vain to break his daring spirit into submission to the Church—he was sentenced to death. He replied: "I suspect you are more afraid to pronounce that sentence than I am to receive it."‡ At the place of execution the fire blazes round him, but "no expression of suffering passes across the wan and pale but still handsome features." A priest thrusts a crucifix before his dying gaze, but he averts his eyes with a menacing gesture.

The priests destroyed Bruno, but they could not destroy the thoughts and ideas which he had sown all over Europe, and to-day his statue triumphantly marks the spot in Rome where he endured his fiery martyrdom—an inspiration to all succeeding free spirits to attack the devilish superstition which encompassed his destruction, and which would repeat the deed again to-morrow, as the murder of Ferrer testifies.

The life of Jesus is not an ideal for us to follow. Moreover, the Freethinker does not put one man on a pedestal for exclusive admiration; he chooses the greatest and best from the lives of all the great and heroic men of all the ages.

W. MANN.

To G. W. Foote.

WHEN this black midnight's gone and noontide's blue
Consoles affrighted lands with hope and peace;
When men forsake the Church and women cease
Their sickly craving for a life untrue;
When all have done what some e'en now can do:
Have cast their idols down to find release;
When soft religion dies and smiles increase
Till laughter shakes the old world and the new:
Then shall the brave old fighters be revered,
Their names be scribed within the halls of fame,
Their statues rise upon the city square;
And you, bold man, now hated well and feared,
When all the bishops make but one weak name
Shall be a hero honored everywhere.

JULIAN ST. OREY.

Even should the present generation be injured by the abolition of existing faiths, yet abolition would be justified. Succeeding generations would breathe an atmosphere of truth instead of being reared in an atmosphere of falsehood, and we who are so deeply indebted to our ancestors have incurred obligations towards our posterity. Let us therefore purify the air, and if the light kills a few sickly plants which have become acclimatised to impurity and darkness, we must console ourselves with the reflection that in nature it is always so, and that of two evils we have chosen that which is the least.—*Winwood Reade.*

Acid Drops.

It really seems as though Christian evidences were fatal to any man's reputation for either fairplay or decency. Mr. W. T. Lee, the Christian Evidence lecturer, whose name will be known to most of our readers, was recently lecturing in Bristol. We are informed that, in reply to a question from one of the audience, he gave the information that the editor of the *Freethinker* was imprisoned for publishing "indecent pictures." If Mr. Lee actually said this—and we should certainly not notice the statement without the information coming from one on whose word we believe we may rely—we find it hard to deal with it without descending to the use of "unparliamentary" language. For if Mr. Lee sees the *Freethinker* he must know how often this particular piece of Christian blackguardism has been dealt with, and therefore also knows how false it is. Mr. Foote's indictment was for "blasphemy," and for blasphemy alone. There was not a word about indecency in the indictment, and Lord Coleridge, from his position on the bench, distinctly and emphatically assured the jury, referring to Mr. Foote, "You do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind." We believe there are few Christian Evidence lecturers who could justly be granted the same certificate, nor, if our information be accurate, would Mr. Lee deserve the same compliment. If Mr. Lee really believes what he is reported to have said, his debating on several occasions with Mr. Foote reflects little credit upon his own character. Nor is he, we observe, above quoting a testimonial to his oratorical abilities from the journal which contained the alleged "indecent pictures." Perhaps Mr. Lee will explain both his conduct in the past and his language in the present.

Our pious contemporary, the *Church Times*, is greatly upset over the modern English Divorce Law. In its most impressive manner it warns the public that "we are face to face with a danger that threatens the maintenance of the family as a settled institution, the very basis of our social life." The editor hopes that good Christians will not only condemn the multiplication of divorce, but also oppose the law which permits divorce. "It is this," he says, "that is the enemy to be attacked.....So long as any one of us is hampered by the notion that the innocent party, at all events, is at liberty to marry again in the lifetime of the other party.....he really has nothing to fight about." We admit the Christian character of this position, but it is hopelessly out of touch with modern opinion, which in this instance represents common sense. There is no justification whatever for condemning the innocent party in a divorce suit to perpetual celibacy; and as for the guilty party, his—or her—celibacy is likely to exist in name only. The only reason the *Church Times* has for its position is the saying attributed to the Gospel Jesus; but as he gave all the rights of divorce to the husband—even allowing him to be both accuser and judge—while giving no right whatever to the wife, it represents a position directly opposed both to justice and common sense. Modern opinion says quite rightly that if two people can't live together in a cleanly and desirable manner they are far better apart, and it would be iniquitous to legally punish the innocent party for the fault of the guilty one. The position taken up by the *Church Times* is only interesting because it illustrates how Christianity prevents people taking a sensible and just view of social relations. We do not bother over its talk concerning the danger to the family, etc. This is mere verbiage, used to give an appearance of sanity to its religious prejudices.

Rev. G. L. Richardson, writing in the *Heamor Parish Magazine*, one of those intellectually anemic journals issued for the encouragement of the mentally somnolent, writes that the chief interest for Dissenters on the question of Disestablishment is Disendowment. Well, we believe he is very near the truth; but, on the other hand, we fancy the chief interest of the advocates of a State Church lies in the same direction. The truth is that religion in a civilised State is a subsidised superstition, kept afloat by the money of dead men. We do not mean by this that living people do not give to religion; far from it. But their giving is very largely the result of the example of the pious dead constantly held before them, and by the fact of their being born into the midst of religious institutions that but for these endowments would scarcely exist.

Mr. Richardson reminds his readers that "In every law-court in France there used to hang a picture of the crucifixion," and adds that this has now been "torn down," and the State is committed to a secular ideal. Well, the picture has been taken down—we presume "torn" is used by Mr. Richardson because it carries a suggestion of ruffianly

* *Christianity in its Cradle*, p. 57.

† *Marcus Aurelius*, p. 347.

‡ *Owen, The Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 327.

brutality. But we are quite at a loss to see what good it did while it was hung up—unless it cheered up prisoners with the reflection that the Gospel Jesus was also executed under religious patronage. Anyway, the picture did not prevent Dreyfus being sent to his martyrdom, and it certainly had nothing to do with the Atheist Zola's heroic work in bringing him back to France a vindicated man.

Sir Robert Anderson, the ex-police official, who has made a big sensation by his admission of the authorship of some of the "Parnellism and Crime" letters, is a Zionist crank. He regards the return of the Jews to Palestine as a dead certainty, and the partition of the "Roman" Empire as one of the most prominent political events of the near future.

Rev. Principal Forsyth is a miraculously lucky man. He went into solitude and heard God taking a text and preaching a sermon from it. The text was the drowning of the late Rev. Thomas Law, and the sermon consisted of a series of reflections upon that sad catastrophe. We are bound to confess, however, that there is nothing in the sermon to indicate its Divine authorship. The style is the Principal's very own; nor is there a superhuman stamp upon the ideas expressed. On the whole, we are of opinion that, if the Principal really believes in God, it was somewhat presumptuous on his part to attribute a Divine origin to the homily which he himself laboriously constructed. But, as a matter of fact, every preacher is guilty of the same blasphemy every time he enters the pulpit.

"Jesus is mighty to help, strengthen, and keep," exclaimed a popular preacher. "Nothing can baffle him but the power of the human will." Fancy the human will baffling the Divine will, the finite overcoming the infinite, and severely limited power defeating omnipotence. This is only a device of the pulpit to explain away the dismal failure of the Cross. That can only be done by a glaring contradiction in terms, as well as by a direct perversion of the truth.

Speaking of a recently issued volume of essays dealing with the life of Jesus, the *Church Times* curtly remarks, "there are no materials" for "constructing a Life of our Blessed Lord." Which is precisely what we have always pointed out. Every such "life" is an essay in romance, and with some of them, as a lady remarked of Renan's excursion in this direction, it is a pity they do not wind up with a wedding.

All the newspapers, Christian and otherwise, have duly chronicled and praised the Standard Oil King's gift of £32,400 to the church of which Dr. C. F. Aked is pastor, and of which Mr. Rockefeller is the chief attraction and practical owner. Dr. Aked, the once radical social reformer of Liverpool, was anxious to get a new church because the old one was not worthy, so runs the *Daily News* report, of its wealthy members. So the pastor preached a moving sermon, and the wealthy congregation sang—

"Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold,"

and afterwards handed up a collection of £64,800. Thus Mr. Aked will get his church suitable for its "wealthy members," and these will be able to lean back in luxuriously comfortable pews, and smile approvingly on their tame parson preaching to them on the beauty of a life of self-sacrifice and renunciation. Really it makes one feel that what is needed to finally bury Christianity is not argument, but a widespread and healthy sense of the ridiculous.

While the millionaires' church is being rebuilt, Dr. Aked is to conduct the services in the "millionaires' theatre." We wonder whether there is a millionaires' heaven and a millionaires' hell, and will Dr. Aked conduct services alternately at both places? It would be a pity to part him from the congregation of which he said, "I am proud of you."

Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, a Nonconformist minister, says: "The French Government is openly and eagerly Atheistic. It officially denies God." The French Government is nothing, and does nothing, of the kind. Mr. Morgan Gibbon is simply availing himself of the parson's historic prerogative of speaking falsely concerning those he disagrees with, and trading upon the ignorance and gullibility of those who look to him for guidance. The French Government, whatever the wisdom of certain of its acts may be, is simply aiming at keeping the State clear of all religion. And this is what all governments ought to do, and is the direction in which all civilised governments are travelling. Were Mr. Gibbon any one but a clergyman, one might call upon him to withdraw so monstrous a statement with some prospect of the request being complied with. As it is, such a demand would fail in

its object; and, unfortunately, the sense of truthfulness is not strong enough with Christians, when dealing with Freethinkers, to induce his congregation to insist upon their minister paying more regard to accuracy, and even the decencies of discussion.

In matters of theory as well as of fact Mr. Gibbon entertains some queer notions. "It is not enough to deny God," he says. "Man still remains, and out of his relation to his fellow-men there rise, every day and hour, questions of goodness and badness, of duty and neglect, of honor and meanness, courage and cowardice, truth and falsehood." True, the denial of God is not enough; but it implies a most valuable riddance. It clears the road of progress of its most formidable obstacle. It simplifies the solution of the problems mentioned by the reverend gentleman, and it humanises morality. No, Atheism is not enough; but its advent has meant the beginning of a new life of liberty and law, truth and beauty, knowledge and virtue, humanity and reverence, to many. It purifies the atmosphere.

Mr. Gibbon says that "Atheists are still men." Of course they are; what else does he expect them to be? Do Christians pretend to be more than men? "Expel nature with a fork," said Horace, "she will come back again." But Mr. Gibbon seems to think that if you expel nature with the grace of God she will not come back. What arrant nonsense! If there be a God, man's nature is his gift; and to talk of expelling her is to offer an unforgivable insult to her Maker. The very idea that a man needs to be "cured of being himself" is a virtual denial of God. What man really needs is, not to be "cured of being himself," but such knowledge and appraisal of himself as will enable him to utilise his life to the best advantage of all concerned.

We are almost tired of saying that of all varieties of humbug the Christian kind is the most nauseating, but we cannot avoid repeating the sentiment on reading the following from the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning the relations of the German and English people:—

"Considering our common faith, and with our common action as Christian people, anything other than friendliness is unthinkable—impossible."

And this from Lord Hugh Cecil at the same meeting:—

"Christian men, because they worship the same God and honor the same Christ, are able to do much to ensure perpetual peace among all the Christian peoples of the world."

Nothing but constant practice at the game would enable men to make such statements with a straight face. Why, if Christians were not ready to fight each other, the warships of the world might be sold for scrap metal and the armies disbanded for more peaceful and more profitable occupations. And it is only the greed and bullying of the Christian powers that are driving non-Christian powers along the road of military development. Perhaps one of these speakers will explain when a common Christian belief did stop two nations fighting. Did it prevent the disaster in the South African war? Did it prevent the Christian France of 1870 going to war with the still more Christian Germany? Has it ever operated in that way during the whole of its history? The truth is that no religion on the face of the earth has been, directly or indirectly, responsible for so many wars as has Christianity. And, of all wars, those animated by Christian feeling, inspired by belief in the "same God" and "the same Christ," have been notorious for their brutal ferocity. In the whole of modern history we do not know a single war that Christianity has prevented. We can recall many it has either caused or precipitated.

The *Christian World* is shocked at the French Governor General of Madagascar, at present in France, saying, during the course of a non-official speech:—

"Under the assaults of science all religions now lie overthrown, never to rise again. It is sometimes pleaded that, though thus false, they are socially useful. But it is not so. Nay, the idea of religion is actually a social danger; it is the mother of social hatreds."

The Governor-General, we repeat, did not say this as an official, but in a strictly private capacity, and while home on furlough. Of course, when Mr. Birrell or Mr. Lloyd George air their unintelligent, and sometimes unintelligible, religious opinions—and not always in a strictly non-official capacity—we are on different ground. For they are speaking in defence of Christian beliefs, and so deserve, and get, all encouragement. It is only when the wicked Freethinker opens his mouth that the fat is in the fire.

During the course of a recent discussion in the Canadian House of Commons, the Minister of Finance said that the bulk of the bad silver coins in circulation found their way into

church collecting boxes. We are not surprised at the information. The point we are curious about is, what becomes of the bad coins that are taken out of the collecting boxes? Do the church officials spend their time in passing them on to the unsuspecting general public?

Apropos of the Kaiser's son's visit to Jerusalem, there has been some trouble concerning the rival gardens of Gethsemane. The two proprietors both wanted the royal patronage, so the man who owns the more modern garden, knowing that the trees looked rather youthful, had some genuine old trees transplanted. Hoch der Kaiser!

We are informed, *sub rosa*, that the Trades' Union movement has taken root in the Church of England, and that a union of curates has been formed to secure a minimum wage. We do not say that curates lack justification for their action, although it cannot be taken as evidence of their reliance upon the power of God. But the movement opens up some delightful possibilities. A list of "trade" churches, a strike of curates, or a lock-out initiated by a clerical employers' association, should provide good copy for the newspapers. There is one thing we feel assured of, and that is, that the general public would face a strike of curates with greater equanimity than it would a coal or railway strike—they might even encourage it.

The Rev. John Tuckwell is on his war-horse again. He is one of the few Christians who accept the Bible as the infallible Word of an infallible God. The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall belongs to the larger school which pronounces the Bible fallible, and yet calls and treats it as the Word of God. These two men of God are going for each other hammer and tongs just now in the *Baptist Times*. The dispute is ridiculous in the extreme, and, to those who are identified with neither party, equally foolish. Mr. Tuckwell is theoretically consistent and logical. If the Bible is the work of an infallible person it must partake of its author's infallibility. But, as a matter of fact, the Bible abounds in mistakes, contradictions, absurdities, and obscenities, to all of which Mr. Tuckwell pretends to be blind. Dr. Marshall admits their existence, and yet regards and professionally employs the volume in which they occur as the inspired Word of God. Is it possible to conceive of a more illogical, irrational, and ludicrous position?

The colossal ignorance of preachers is simply amazing. One writer in the *Baptist Times* refers to "such theories as the Nebular Hypothesis, Darwin's theory of the Origin of Species, the atomic theory of matter" as things that have been proved false. "My scientific friends," he says, "tell me all these are now given up, and so I feel glad I did not give up verbal inspiration for them." The truth is, however, as every fairly intelligent person well knows, that not one of those theories has ever been given up. It is true that the atom has broken up and given place to the electron; but it is also true that the electron is of precisely the same nature as the atom, only smaller in size. It is humiliating to know that men like the writer just quoted are allowed to set up as teachers and guides to their fellow-beings.

The Southend Dramatic and Operatic Societies have supported cots at the local Victoria Hospital for some years. The local clergy are now jealous of their fame for philanthropy, and have decided to make collections among the Sunday-school children with the same laudable object. The Church is a long way behind the Stage in this matter.

Rev. Dr. Anderson, of Dundee, is almost persuaded to be a Freethinker. He has given up the historical Jesus, and he admits that Christian experience does not prove the objective truth of Christianity. The Christ he worships is the creation of the human imagination. But what folly it is to worship an imaginary personage.

The clergy are always telling us that stories first heard at mother's knee are never forgotten. Quite so! And rules of conduct, enforced with a slipper at father's knee, leave just as vivid an impression.

A Yankee scientist states that he can bleach the negro's skin. Under his treatment "God's image carved in ebony" will become as white as snow. The Christian Church says it can whitewash the colored man's soul, and this scientist claims that he can modify his complexion. This happy union of science and religion will enable the American Christian gentleman to grasp the African Christian's hand instead of kicking him under the coat-tails, as heretofore.

One of the distinctive features of modern Christianity, says the *Christian Commonwealth*, is the insistence on social

service. It would be nearer the mark to say that modern Christianity's distinctive feature is the insistence on anything that will "catch on."

The belief in the men of the Protestant Reformation as being high-minded and animated with the desire to raise religion to a greater moral eminence is almost as widespread a superstition as is that of the lofty morality of the primitive Christians. For this reason we are pleased to see, in a review of Haile's *Life of Reginald Pole*, Mr. Martin Hume pointing out that "The Reformation period was one of high professions and utterly unscrupulous action." Nearly all the chief secular figures, Catholic and Protestant alike, were lavish in their protestations that their sole aim was the establishment of righteousness on earth, while their actions were, as is pointed out, marked by "greed, ambition, and the blackest falsity." And on the religious side the narrowness and intolerance of the principal characters was so obvious, their love of power so obtrusive, once they had secured position, that there seems little to choose between them and the Church they opposed. In final analysis, whatever good came from the Reformation—meagre enough in any case—came from the divisions of the sects and inevitable secularising of the State, and not from any inherent good in the movement itself.

"Spiritual" Christianity has always kept a keen gaze on the financial side of things, and there is nothing that inspires so fervent a sermon as the necessity of free giving. In Birmingham, the clergy are complaining of the very small contributions made by their congregations. It is not, in this case, a question of passing bad silver coins, but of their not giving silver at all. One cleric denounces the givers as disciples of a "copper Christianity," overlooking the possibility of the retort that the givers, maybe, thought their copper represented the full value of the sermon. Canon Carnegie says the clergy must inculcate the obligation of systematic giving—as though preachers have ever ceased to press this upon their followers.

Canon Carnegie also says that for centuries past English religion has been, to a large extent, an eleemosynary religion, "a religion provided by the rich, whether dead or alive, for the poor." Well, there is more truth and significance in this than probably Canon Carnegie imagines. In Holy Russia drinking among the peasants has been deliberately encouraged by a pious government, partly for financial reasons and partly because if the peasantry could only be kept desirably drunk, there would be less chance of the revolutionary agitator finding material amongst them. And historically, there is little question that the rich have provided religion for the poor under the quite justifiable conviction that so long as they were properly religious their own position was secure. We cannot think, at the time of writing, of any sums of money being left or spent for the purpose of preaching religion to the better financially endowed portions of society. It was always at the poor that their efforts were aimed. Not alone had these people to bear their poverty, but, in addition, they had to submit to the preaching of a number of uninvited evangelists. And those who paid, doubtless felt that their outlay represented a fairly profitable investment. The concern of the vested interests of all countries to see that the people are well supplied with religion, is not quite so foolish a policy as superficial observers are apt to imagine. The poor must be kept content in their poverty, the oppressed must be reconciled by their oppression, and no instrument has yet been forged that will do this so effectively as religion.

It is announced that the "deep current of religion" in the late Mr. Gladstone's life was only "scantily treated" in Lord Morley's biography. Mr. D. C. Lathbury is engaged on a work that will remedy this defect. The writing of such a book seems to us an act of questionable kindness. Gladstone is dead—few leading public characters are dead—and his faults might well have been interred with his bones. Verily, the evil that men do lives after them.

There are two Richmonds in the field—at least, there are two Canons of the Church bearing the name of Hicks. And this has led to some confusion of identity. One Canon Hicks publicly announced his conversion to Socialism, and said he intended selling all he had, including a motor-car, and giving the proceeds to the poor. The other Canon Hicks (of Manchester) has been much bothered with letters intended for the first-named, and has had to explain that his particular foolishness does not take the same form as that of Canon Hicks number one. Both of them believe in the same text, however, although one clearly thinks the other a fool for practising it.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(All early dates cancelled until further notice.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 24, Liverpool.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £201 3s. 6d. Received since:—R. Young, 10s.; Dr. Martin, £1 1s. *Per Miss Vance*:—Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee (Quarterly Subscription), £1 18s. 6d.

Will correspondents please note that all letters not meant for Mr. Foote personally, but which contain matter of an editorial character, notices of meetings, etc., should be addressed "Editor of *Freethinker*"? Otherwise they cannot be dealt with in time for the following week's issue of this paper.

R. DAWE ROSS (Cape Colony).—Gratified to hear of your re-election as Mayor of Douglas. Presumably the people prefer a tried *Freethinker* to untried Christians. *Freethinkers* are like *Freethought*—once used, always used. Your prophecy *re* Mr. Lloyd, while still in the Church, has justified itself. He, and the rest of our staff, will be gratified at learning how much you enjoy your *Freethinker*. The "mite" to which you refer as sent for the Honorarium Fund was not, however, among the enclosures. The envelope bore four penny stamps, and appeared to be intact. Perhaps the "mite" was inadvertently omitted.

F. W. HEASE.—We appreciate all you are doing in the interest of the *Freethinker*, and agree with your principle of passing the paper along. Many of our readers take an extra copy for this purpose, and we are always pleased to send free copies to addresses with which we are furnished. Your other suggestion would, we fear, mean a disfigurement of the paper, and we naturally are concerned to keep its appearance as attractive as possible.

G. F. H. McCLUSKEY sends subscription to Shilling Month and "best wishes for a bumper, which should be easy if the rank and file came up to the scratch."

JULIAN ST. OREY.—Sorry we cannot trace the matter about which you write. We are pleased to hear that *Freethought* has made so much headway at Oxford, and that "there are hundreds of University *Freethinkers*, young and old." We hope they will all realise that the great need of to-day is a *Freethought* that is at once logical in conception and courageous in action. Thanks for enclosure, which shall appear.

J. BAYCE.—MSS. received with thanks; also photo, with which Mr. Foote will be pleased. We will forward your good wishes to him along with the portrait. Your regret at his illness is one in which all well-wishers to *Freethought* join.

E. LECHMERE.—Mr. Foote will fully appreciate your good wishes, and admiration of his long devotion to *Freethought*. It is indeed a "noble cause"—one of the noblest, we believe, to which a man can devote his energies.

R. YOUNG.—Glad to hear from so old a reader of the *Freethinker*. Twenty years is a long acquaintance, and we are gratified to learn that the paper still appeals to you.

W. CLAYTON.—A portion of your enclosure has been handed to our shop manager, as desired. The other is duly acknowledged elsewhere. Thanks for what you are doing to stimulate the sale of this paper.

SAXON.—For your own sake we regret the disability under which you labor, and which prevents you doing all you would wish. It is those who can help upon whom we wish to impress the duty of action. Thanks for cuttings.

H. GOOD says: "Without doubt the *Freethinker* is the best paper ever printed." We are certain it isn't the worst.

M. BARNARD.—Your letter was overlooked. Better write Mr. Foote again when he resumes the editorial chair.

JOHN BLAND.—Your name is familiar to us from of old, and we appreciate your good wishes.

A. FIRTH.—We are rich in the good wishes of our friends.

SPENCER TARR hopes the total of shillings will exceed the 3,000.

W. BINDON.—Thanks for the information, with which you will see we have dealt in another column.

J. W. REPTON.—We regret the circumstances, but unfortunately the matter is one that must wait until Mr. Foote can attend to it personally, which we trust will be soon.

E. WHITTY.—Thanks for cutting. We presume the two papers belong to the one firm, and the same matter is used for both.

W. MAUGHAN.—We remember Mr. Richardson, and are pleased to hear from one of his converts. Your efforts at introducing the *Freethinker* to new readers are fully appreciated.

T. J. THURLOW.—There is no cause for alarm. Mr. Foote is now making all reasonable progress towards complete health, and we hope will soon be about as usual. Letters such as yours will give him consolation during his forced inactivity.

R. WALL.—One portion of your letter must wait until Mr. Foote is able to deal with it. The other has been attended to.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.—B. G. Brown, 18 Meridian-place, Clifton, Bristol.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Special.

READERS of the *Freethinker* will be gratified to learn that at the time of writing (Tuesday) Mr. Foote is making all reasonable speed towards recovery. The wound remaining from the operation is healing finely, although of necessity but slowly. Patience, however, is a virtue that, as Mr. Foote says, he learnt long ago, when he waited twelve months for a door to open. Still, the worst is over, and we shall all hope to see him quite well again in time for the N. S. S. Annual Conference. The many friends who have written expressing their sympathy and concern, both to the office and direct to Mr. Foote, must take this notice as an acknowledgment. Meanwhile he sends "a message of love to all lovers of *Freethought*," and his friends will be gratified to learn that it is written with his own hand. C. COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

There was another good audience at Shoreditch on Sunday evening last to listen to Mr. Cohen, whose lecture, judging by the applause, was thoroughly appreciated. The chair was taken in most excellent fashion by Mr. J. Jewell, whom we hope to see often officiating on such occasions. Unfortunately, the third and last meeting of this series, owing to Mr. Foote's illness, had to be dropped. Neither Mr. Lloyd nor Mr. Cohen were available for this date. In all probability another course will be arranged at this hall in the early autumn, when we hope nothing will prevent Mr. Foote taking his part in the proceedings.

To-day, Sunday (April 24), Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool, which conclude the indoor lectures this season. *Freethinkers* in the district ought to make a special note of this, and endeavor to be present. It is, perhaps, not of much use advising Christians to do likewise, but the more of these that are there the better. At any rate, we hope that all concerned will do their best to secure a good meeting, both in the afternoon and in the evening.

We are nearing the end of April, and there must be a large number who intend subscribing to our Easter Egg Fund, but who have not yet done so. As we do not intend to continue this fund beyond the end of the month, we invite these careless ones to hurry. Half the subscription is devoted to the support of the *Freethinker*, and half to the coffers of the National Secular Society. The latter needs replenishing, but in both instances the money goes to the furtherance of a common cause.

We hope that provincial and Scotch Branches are well on with their arrangements for representation at the forthcoming N. S. S. Conference (London, May 15). The St. James's Hall has been engaged for the evening meeting, and a smaller hall in the same building for the business meetings during the day. The speakers will be Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. F. A. Davies, and others. There will be a Conference Luncheon, but if this is to be made thoroughly satisfactory those who intend sharing should let Miss Vance know without delay. Those who wish accommodation to be secured for them during their stay in London should also make their wishes known early. Further announcements with reference to a Monday excursion, etc., will be made later.

Four new leaflets for free distribution have just been issued by the N. S. S. Their titles are: *The Principles of Secularism*, *Where are your Hospitals? Because the Bible tells me so*, and *The Bible and Teetotalism*. All four are admirably adapted for propaganda work, and may be purchased from the secretary of the Society at a cost of 6d. per 100.

The Secular Society, Limited, is also assisting the literary side of Freethought work by having purchased from the Pioneer Press a quantity of pamphlets, etc., and placing the same at the disposal of Miss Vance for free distribution. Branches of the N. S. S. may have parcels sent, carriage forward, on communicating with Miss Vance at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

We are asked to announce that the West Ham Branch N. S. S. will hold a "Social Evening" on Saturday, April 30, in the Forest Gate Public Hall, Woodgrange-road. A program of song, dances, recitation, and games has been arranged. As the gathering is for Freethinkers, admission is to be free.

Shilling Month.

Easter Eggs for Freethought.

FIFTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

(The Figures mean the number of Shillings.)

A. S. V., 2; J. E. S., 2; M. Barnard, 2; J. A. and M. Capon, 3; H. Good, 5; W. Milroy, 2½; John Milroy, 2½; Another Postman, 2; G. F. H. McCluskey, 10; Harry Tucker, 5; S. Fellows, 2½; Spencer Tarr, 2½; H. A. Lupton, 3; A. Firth, 5; D. Gillespie, 5; John Bland, 2; G. R. Harker, 20; G. Grizzell, 2; J. P. C., 2; W. Clayton, 2½; Three Tiverton Infidels, 6; W. Maughan, 2; T. J. Thurlow, 3; Erin, 1; G. Gee, 2; M. Muller, 5; A. Shand, 1. *Per Miss Vance*:—J. Thackray, 1; B. Thackray, 1; Geo. Dixon (Morpeth), 5; Kingsland Branch N. S. S., 20; F. B., 2.

The Origin of Life.—II.

(Concluded from p. 244.)

DURING the earlier days of Lister's work, chemists and physicians attributed the putrefaction of wounds to the presence of oxygen, and elaborate precautions were taken to prevent the access of atmospheric air. The researches of Pasteur and his predecessors suggested to Lister the opinion that it was not the air, but some substance contained in the air, which was solely responsible for putrefaction. Consequently, in all future surgical work he guarded his patients, not from the oxygen, but against the floating germs of the atmosphere, which were the real source of infection. The successful results thus obtained through Lister's foresight led to the antiseptic system of surgery, this leading in its turn to the germ theory of disease. Subsequent workers in this field have established the truth that the source of contagious and infectious diseases is to be traced to the multiplication of minute organisms within the body of the patient. The extended labors of bacteriologists have resulted in the discovery of many of the microbes responsible for the spread of disease; in each case a specific bacillus is regarded as the cause of a specific malady, and that specific malady alone.

If the genesis of disease is to be traced to the dissemination of minute living organisms, it is a matter of supreme importance to determine whether such organisms can arise *de novo*, or, on the other hand, to ascertain beyond all possible doubt or uncertainty whether these micro-organisms always take their rise from pre-existing germs. If living bacteria are spontaneously generated at the present day, then the greatest precautions ever taken by pathologists—while these may act as preventives to spread of contagious diseases—can never give certain assurance that diseases will not, at any time, be independently produced by the spontaneous appearance of germs, wherever conditions are suitable. But assuming, on the other hand, that bacteria can only arise from antecedent bacteria, medical science will, in all human probability, soon control the origin and spread of diseases and ultimately banish them from our midst. It must be admitted that, judged from this standpoint, the settlement of the problem of abiogenesis *versus* biogenesis becomes one of supreme moment to the human race.

With this aspect in mind, Dr. Charlton Bastian re-opened the controversy. The term "spontaneous

generation" had been employed to cover a wide field of investigation, acquiring in consequence a somewhat vague significance. Bastian, therefore, proposed to substitute the term "heterogenesis" to signify the origin of life from completely sterilised, and consequently lifeless, infusions.

The experiment we are about to describe may be regarded as typical. After cleansing a flask with boiling water, Bastian filled three-fourths of it with the fluid that was to be made the subject of investigation. With the aid of a spirit-lamp and blow-pipe the neck of the flask was then drawn out to a narrow inlet, and the fluid in the containing vessel boiled. While the liquid was boiling, the neck of the flask was sealed, a partial vacuum being thus obtained, while any possible life germs resident in the liquid were sterilised by the heating process. After a few days' interval the flask was opened by fracturing its neck in the flame of the spirit-lamp. The inrush of air showed a well-maintained vacuum, so that no atmospheric air could have gained access to the infusion during the experimental period. Nevertheless, the infusion was swarming with living, active Bacteria and Vibria. Many similar researches conducted with organic infusions and with inorganic solutions of ferric, ammoniac citrate, etc., yielded equally positive results which, combined with the brilliant writing and logical acumen displayed in Dr. Bastian's early work, *The Beginnings of Life*, largely cancelled the results of Pasteur's investigations.

It is, of course, relatively easy to arrive at positive conclusions from experiments such as Bastian's, but it is also singularly difficult to convince the opposite side that positive conclusions of a favorable complexion are warranted by the facts. While negative results such as Pasteur's are, under one set of conditions, uniformly obtained, it is always open to the supporters of abiogenesis to declare that the innumerable heatings to which the infusions, solutions, and decoctions are subjected so completely change their chemical condition that the genesis of life is absolutely precluded. And by the Biogenists such startling results as Bastian's are derided on the ground that his test substances have never been thoroughly sterilised, or that, as a result of carelessness or oversight, contact has been established between his preparations and the mote-laden air.

In a matter so open to misconception, and seemingly where no unanimity of scientific opinion can reasonably be looked for, there would have been small cause for wonder had men of science refused to devote any further time or attention to so barren a field. Bastian's findings, however, did not remain unexamined. So philosophical and impartial a critic as Tyndall took up the question, and a painstaking effort was made to arrive at the truth.

Before commencing this special inquiry, Professor Tyndall made the discovery that air which under ordinary optical conditions appears pure reveals, when it crosses the path of an electric beam, minute particles of dust, much as a sunbeam shining through a chink displays floating matter which is quite invisible in diffused daylight.

Tyndall proceeded to test Bastian's experiments by adopting the principles the latter had laid down. Hundreds of these experiments were repeated, but with diametrically opposite results. Under the precise test conditions in which Bastian discovered his tubes teeming with life Tyndall, in every instance in which no accident had befallen his apparatus, found nothing save barren tubes to survey.

In addition to making a thoughtful and careful examination of the researches of his predecessors, Tyndall, armed with his discovery of the floating matter of the air, launched out in a new and hitherto novel direction. He was thus enabled to utilise the presence of the floating atmospheric particles in refining his experimental work. One of the most striking and suggestive experiments was carried out under the following conditions. The apparatus consisted of a small air-tight box made of wood, with a glass front, and a small glass window let in at each end. The interior of the box was carefully coated

with glycerine, so that the particles suspended in the atmosphere might be safely secured. The bottom of the box was perforated in such a way that a double row of apertures was made for the reception of the fixed air-tight test tubes. The electric beam was then made to traverse the experimental box, entering by one of the lateral windows and emerging by the other. The track of the electric beam showed the air within the box to be laden with particles, but after a few days' interval the dust was deposited upon the interior surfaces, and the contained air, so far as the electric searchlight revealed, had become completely pure. Infusions of organic matter were then introduced into the test tubes by a pipette inserted in an air-tight manner into an orifice in the roof. When half filled with infusions the contents of the test tubes were sterilised, thus obviating the risk of life developing from germs resident in the preparations. These elaborate, if necessary, precautions taken, the entire apparatus remained untouched for some weeks; the infusions continued perfectly clear, and no indications of life appeared. After a month had rolled by, a small door at the back of the experimental chamber was opened and the air of the laboratory admitted. In two days all the infusions swarmed with life. The result of this and kindred experiments furnished the most conclusive evidence up to that point presented against the occurrence of heterogenesis. Despite a few inharmonious results due to fracture or other accidents, Tyndall's results were in agreement with the experiment described, and when in 1881 he published his researches,* the overthrow of the theory of abiogenesis appeared complete.

Although there was now practically unanimity of opinion among biologists concerning the untenability of Bastian's position, the advocate of heterogenesis remained unshaken. The thorough honesty and sincerity of his convictions has been amply demonstrated by the fact that he has dedicated the evening of his days to a further and fuller examination of the whole matter in dispute. Several volumes from his pen dealing with this subject have issued from the press within the past few years. His researches and conclusions are probably best summarised in his work on *The Nature and Origin of Living Matter*. In this volume Bastian complains that his critics are continually modifying the conditions of experiment. The highest temperature to which bacteria spores could be subjected without the intervention of death being agreed upon as 110° C., Bastian found life developed in infusions which had been raised to that temperature. The death point was promptly declared to be 115° C. Successful experiments being conducted at this temperature, Bastian's antagonists placed the point of death at 140° C., and so on until the crack of doom.

There is doubtless much justice in Bastian's contention that his critics demand impossible conditions. Nevertheless, he has some difficulty in explaining why his opponents' results are always negative. That the germinating power of an infusion is destroyed by the heating processes to which it is submitted is undoubtedly true. Bastian found neutral ammoniac tartrate solution quite pure long after boiling, though freely exposed to the air, while the same solution soon swarmed with life when undesicated. And Dr. Bastian also argues that the precautions which exclude germs at the same time prevent the entrance of dead organic particles which possibly act as ferments necessary to the generation of life. His apologia in this instance may seem similar in nature to that of his critics, and the supposed atmospheric ferments appear quite as hypothetical as the death-point of bacteria.

After an experimental battle ranging over 350 years this vexed problem remains as unsettled as it was when Redi challenged the practically universal belief of his day, which favored a doctrine now generally regarded as obsolete. But while admitting that abiogenesis is for the moment under a cloud,

the varying fortunes of this theory in the past behoves us to remember that it may regain scientific favor in the future. It is fair to think, however, that whatever demonstration the coming years may provide, the experimental method is in itself insufficient to solve the problem of the origin of life. Professor Weismann has forcibly remarked that "It would be impossible to prove by experiments that spontaneous generation has never taken place; because each negative experiment would only prove that it does not arise under the conditions of the experiment. But this by no means excludes the possibility that it might under other conditions." Bearing in mind the differences which obtain in the experimental laboratory and in nature—many conceivable factors being absent in the former—it will be at once conceded that the experimental researches of the future are likely to prove as inconclusive as those we have briefly surveyed.

If the scientific methods of observation and experiment which have proved so fruitful in other departments of nature are in this complex case so unconvincing, we are driven to approach this problem along lines of analogy and philosophical probability. It is granted that this method enables us to arrive at those conclusions which harmonise with our feelings. But with this reservation, we submit that if Bastian's views are impartially considered along analogical and evolutionary lines, his position gains in strength. In his very able work, *The Beginnings of Life*, Bastian contended that spontaneous generation is necessitated by the theory of evolution. It certainly seems a most extraordinary fact that the lowliest organisms should have persisted unchanged for millions of years. Yet this is the position of those evolutionists who deride the doctrines of Heterogenesis and Archibiosis. They are driven to suppose that all the vast and varied forms of animal and vegetable life now occupying the surface of the globe are the evolutionary outcome of forms practically identical with those which Bastian claims are still arising *de novo*. They are thus forced to the position that some few only of the simple earliest forms of life possessed the capacity to develop into more complex organisms, while the others remained stationary through all the æons represented by the earth's fossil-bearing rocks. When biologists trace the pedigree of plants and animals, they select these simplest forms as their starting point. Why is it that the varying capacity which all organisms are declared to display has, in the case of these protists, never presented any favorable variations upon which Natural Selection could operate? It seems impossible on received orthodox scientific lines to frame a satisfactory answer to this question. As a convinced and let us hope consistent evolutionist, I contend that the question of Abiogenesis can by no manner of means be dismissed as a closed one. In my humble judgment this enigmatical persistence of these simple forms of living matter—the unchanged witnesses of the panorama of life's ascent—constitutes one of the most startling and striking phenomena in the entire range of biological science.

T. F. P.

Persecution !

OR

The Attempt to Suppress Freedom of Speech in Chicago.—II.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Continued from p. 252.)

BUT if it is neither liberty nor truth that the supporters of the creeds need or desire, what is all this commotion about? Why are they so active, and why so agitated? Again I am going to use an illustration: Suppose a report were in circulation that this hall seated ten thousand people. The only way to prevent people from doubting that report, and to derive every possible advantage from it, would be to

* *Floating Matter of the Air*,

make it a punishable act for anyone to try to ascertain the actual seating capacity of the hall. In the same way, to prevent people from questioning the divine origin of a certain collection of anonymous writings, *free thought* must be denounced as treason against society. It is a certain opinion about the Bible, and not the truth about the Bible, that the Churches are interested in upholding. Their fight is not for the truth, but for the creed. It might be replied that they believe the creed to be the truth. Why, then, do they fear free speech? Can free speech hurt the truth? It might the creed. It has. But show us one instance where a simple truth has been killed by liberty of thought and expression. The Churches do not enjoy our prosperity here—not because they think we are hurting the truths of history, science, and life—but because we are hurting the dogmas of the Churches, dogmas which fear ventilation. The Protestant preacher is sworn to defend—the creed; the Catholic is sworn to defend the Church; the Rationalist is bound by the everlasting law of honor to sacrifice both creed and Church to the truth.

But let us continue: The severity of the persecution is always in proportion to the tenability of the creed. If the creed is very difficult to believe in, the persecution has to be very severe; if the creed is more or less rational, little or no violence would be necessary to enforce it. This is very interesting. You do not have to whip a man, for instance, to make him believe that a day in June can be rare, or that a loving kiss makes the heart leap forth; but you have to get after him with a crowbar—with halter and thumbscrew—faggot and fire—to make him believe that three Gods make one God, and one God makes three God. The severity of the persecution is determined by the degree of credibility of the belief. Judaism and Christianity have shed more blood than either Confucianism or Buddhism, for the reason that the dogmas of the former were more incredible. Tallyrand, the French statesman, says that "Spain is a country where two and two make five." And the Spanish Inquisition claims the credit for that! It takes an instrument like the Holy Inquisition, with its torture chambers, and its daily burnings of men and women, to work such a miracle. I have always maintained that not a drop of blood would ever have been shed in the name of religion had its teachings been reasonable. There would have been no need for a Catholic Inquisition in Spain; a Protestant Inquisition in Scotland; the massacre of Huguenots in France; and Puritan outrages against helpless women in America, had the creeds complied with common sense. Persecution is the only argument that can keep an absurd opinion alive. There is the story of persecution in a nutshell. It takes reasoning to convince mankind of the rotundity of the earth, or of the law of gravitation. But it takes violence—force, fire, hell, and devils to convince the world that the mother of Jesus was a virgin, and that those who do not so believe it will be burned in sulphur and fire for ever.

But there is no such persecution in America to-day, you will hear people say. Of course not. Let us suppose that a man who has been stealing a thousand dollars a week from his employer when business was prosperous, is now stealing only ten or twenty, because business is poor. Would that prove that he is now a *reformed* thief? When he stole a thousand dollars, he only stole as much as the business allowed; and when he steals only ten dollars, he steals as much as the business allows. In the same way, religions always persecute as much as public sentiment will allow. They persecute to the extent of their ability and opportunity. Show me when Protestantism had the opportunity to persecute, and did not do so. Religions to-day cannot take our lives, but they can close a public hall against us. And the fact that they have done this proves that they are still persecuting to the extent of their ability. Indeed, the peasants of Southern Europe, who, during the Middle Ages, steeped in ignorance and superstition, tore the shingles off their cottages with which to burn a John Huss, or a Giordano Bruno, at the stake, were not

greater persecutors than the Chicago clergy and business men who, in the twentieth century,—after Darwin, after Voltaire, after the discovery of America, after the Declaration of Independence—in America, the world's asylum for the oppressed—will let the Sunday Evening Club have this hall for Christian preaching, but refuse it to us because we do not pronounce their shibboleth! The Church could burn people in the fourteenth century. She burned them. She cannot burn people in the twentieth century, but she can evict them from a public hall, and she does so. What is the difference? She has the will; she lacks only the opportunity.

But is refusing this hall to us persecution? Let us see. Instead of being the Independent Religious Society, let us suppose that we are an independent oil company, and that we have been holding our own against the larger and consolidated oil company, with its enormous capitalisation. One morning we learn that the bigger concern has opened a branch in the same building with us, and a short time later we are ordered by the landlords to seek quarters elsewhere, as the consolidated concern needs the entire building for its own uses. Suppose, also, that the management refused to accept a bid from us for the renewal of our lease, although we offered to pay as much as our competitor. What would that be? The United States government is on the alert to stop the encroachments of corporations which operate in restraint of trade. Is there not a United States of public opinion that will say to the religious trust, with more millions behind it than the Standard Oil commands: "You have a thousand churches and halls to sell your goods in; you have a thousand preachers and agents to market your product; you have all the presses of the country to print and circulate your literature; you command the metropolitan newspapers; you have the bankers and dry-goods merchants enlisted in your service—why do you envy this independent concern its one opportunity to conduct its business and to live; why do you wish to drive it out of business? And why do you covet your neighbor's property, which you do by seizing its location and offices?" Is there not, I say, an American court of public opinion that shall say to the religious monopoly: "Play fair"? The government can fight the American Tobacco and Standard Oil Trusts; let us fight the greater monopoly—the monopoly that operates in restraint of the commerce of ideas by pinching the brain and gagging the mouth of every American. Why does not the nation rise against this more dangerous monopoly? Because, unlike other monopolies, this is a "holy" monopoly. Holy Monopoly! "Beware of things called 'holy.'" The Holy Inquisition! The Holy Roman Empire! The Holy Alliance! Holy Russia! Holy Bible! I add to this list now another—Holy Monopoly!

(To be continued.)

For the one enemy we have in this Universe is Stupidity, Darkness of Mind; of which darkness again there are many sources, every *sin* a source, and probably self-conceit the chief source. Darkness of mind, in every kind and variety, does to a really tragic extent abound: but of all the kinds of darkness, surely the Pedant darkness, which asserts and believes itself to be *light*, is the most formidable to mankind.—Thomas Carlyle.

Obituary.

WE regret to record the death of Ellen Mary Harrison, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, of 105 East-street-buildings, East-street, W. Miss Harrison was a beautiful character, admired and loved by all who knew her; and she was a confirmed Freethinker. Her greatest wonder was how anybody could really believe the superstitious doctrines of Christianity. Her burial took place at Willesden Green Cemetery on Thursday, April 14, when a Secular Service was conducted by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. Mr. and Mrs. Harrison are stalwart Secularists of over thirty years' standing.

Correspondence.

THE FREE PRESS IN INDIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been a regular subscriber to the *Freethinker* for some years, and, as a rule, have been in hearty agreement with all you have written, and have much admired the courageous manner in which you have always upheld the cause of Freethought. I was, therefore, sorry to read a paragraph in the *Freethinker* of February 13 relating to the Indian Press Act, from which I totally differ. In this you strongly condemn the Act, and extend your sympathy to those against whom it is directed. I think your remarks may perhaps be due to a complete misunderstanding of the present dangerous situation in India, as it seems to me that, with a proper comprehension of the facts, you would probably be about the last man in England to condemn the Indian Government for the steps it has taken to suppress sedition. It has been apparent to every thoughtful and fair-minded person in India that the Government was for a long time most reluctant to move in the direction of suppressing, or in any way curtailing, the freedom of the press, and that the Press Act, which it has at last passed, has been forced upon it as an absolutely necessary measure of self-defence, and as a consequence of the repeated and insistent representations, not only of Europeans, but also of many native chiefs and leading men of the country, who pointed out that unless stringent repressive measures were at once adopted bloodshed and anarchy would inevitably result. The hesitation of the Government to move in the matter was most emphatically condemned by many natives, who were at a loss to understand the reasons which actuated Government in endeavoring to avoid repressive measures. In my opinion, the root cause of the seditious movement in India is not upon the surface, and is little, if at all, understood in England. There doubtless exist some real grievances from which natives of India suffer, causing a certain amount of discontent with the ruling princes, but I feel sure that none of these, taken by themselves, account for the determined efforts and deep plots of a certain section of the people to overthrow the British Government. There is, I think, a far deeper reason than any which has been publicly put forward. The true cause of the seditious movement was, it seems to me, indicated the other day by the Rajah of Rutlaw and another native ruler in their letters to the Viceroy. These men, with a boldness unusual with natives in such matters, pointed out that the seditious propaganda was being pushed forward "under the cloak of religion"! There indeed, I think, lies the whole mystery! It has always been well known that the Brahmins were, of all natives of India, the most disaffected towards the British, and the reason is obvious. The Brahmin priests are still held in veneration by the Hindoos, but they have lost much of the position and power they enjoyed in former times, and they have never ceased to hope that their pristine glory and prestige would some day be restored by the expulsion of the British from India. It is, I think, a fact that all religions in India,—including even the Christian religion,—are slowly but surely decaying, owing mainly, as it seems to me, to the wise policy of the Government of India, which has always been guided by the principle that full liberty should be allowed to all religions and favor to none, as a consequence of which policy secular education has been the rule in government schools. Religious riots have often occurred in India, but whenever one takes place the party which commenced the disturbance has, with absolute impartiality, been the one selected for punishment. All religions being treated alike, and the school not being the happy hunting-ground of priests, a natural decay of religion has set in, and, as a consequence, a remarkable tolerance in regard to religion prevails in the country, both amongst Europeans and natives. Numbers of English officials spend their Sundays in playing golf, shooting, fishing, pig-sticking, and other amusements, and not a parson dares to wag his tongue at them! In no country in the world, I think, is a person less liable to be persecuted for his religious opinions than in India. But this state of things has not been at all to the taste of the Brahminical priesthood. After having occupied the paramount position in India in regard to religion, it has been a humiliation to them to be treated on level terms with other minor priesthods, and they have deeply resented this. A "Free Press" afforded them the opportunity they were looking for, and they were quick to seize upon it. The native press has been worked in the interests of these priests with a licence hardly conceivable in England, the murder of Europeans being boldly advocated, and that by any possible means. A parallel case in England would be if the religious Press were to incite the public to exterminate all Freethinkers, and especially the President of the National Secular Society and his family—in which case I think you would agree that the "Freedom of the Press" is a privilege

which can be carried too far, and that it was time to call in the police!

The leaders of the seditious movement in India are not desirous of bringing about good government—in fact, the better the government the worse for themselves, it being in the nature of priests to be reactionary. They desire nothing less than the total expulsion of the British from India, and this only with a view to their own restoration to the powerful position they formerly held in the country. And here I would point out that, owing to the long period during which the English have held India, numbers of vested interests affecting millions of the natives of the country have grown up with our rule, and these millions would, of course, suffer as well as ourselves by the success of the seditionists. It is a noteworthy fact, moreover, that—as far as can be judged by their public expressions and acts—the rulers of the many native States in India are all loyal to the British. The smaller native States have, indeed, an excellent reason for being so, as in the event of the defeat of the British they would almost certainly be mopped up by the larger and more powerful States.

The seditious movement has, of course, gradually extended far beyond the priestly class. With the usual cunning of priests, the authors of the movement have managed to preach patriotism as well as religion, and thus have drawn into their net many natives who could not otherwise have been prevailed upon to join. But the energy and venom are still supplied from the original source. That the movement is not exclusively aimed at the English is evident from the fact that about fifteen or sixteen months ago an attempt was made to blow up the family of the Maharajah of Kolhapur, who is not a *persona grata* with the Brahmins. Fortunately for the English, all the priests in India do not sympathise with the aims of the Brahmins, and the Sikh priesthood, in particular, received a few years ago an opportune message from heaven, accompanied by a thunderbolt, enjoining the Sikhs to be loyal to, and to fight for, the British! This message is inscribed on two brass tablets on the gate of the Golden Temple at Amritsar, which place I visited about two months ago.

Another extremely fortunate occurrence, in my opinion, has been the appointment, at this critical juncture in the affairs of India, of a stout Freethinker like Lord Morley, as Secretary of State. What might have happened if Mr. Herbert Gladstone had received charge of that portfolio I am afraid to imagine. Lord Morley, with his calm temperament and sound judgment undisturbed by religious emotions, undertook with quiet confidence and courage the seemingly impossible task of suppressing sedition and restoring good feeling between the English and natives without bloodshed. In the extremely dangerous condition of affairs, some degree of severity had, of course, to be shown, to convince the seditionists that murder could not be plotted with impunity, but no such drastic step as the proclamation of martial law was resorted to, nor was the slightest pause made in the carrying out of the measures of reform, which had *previously* been proposed. That peace and order are being gradually restored is, I think, certain, and I for one feel nothing but admiration for, and gratitude to, Lord Morley for the great skill and courage with which he has so far guided the ship of State through the troubled waters! Any *bona fide* grievances from which the native community suffer are being fully represented by the many native members on the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and I feel convinced that the Indian Government, though not perfect, is, on the whole, striving to do its duty, and is, at any rate, absolutely free from any taint of religious bigotry. The Press Act, however repressive it may appear, is not aimed at legitimate criticism—even severe criticism—of the acts of government. All that it aims at is the suppression of such literature as may, in the present inflammable state of the country, lead to murderous attempts to overthrow the English power in India, and, in the circumstances, the Government could hardly, I think, do less.

I have marked this letter "Confidential," not wishing it to be published as a whole; but I have no objection to your making comments on it in a general way, or publishing any extract from it which you may think would be interesting to your readers.

[The above letter is from the pen of a man of position in India. We have omitted his name and address and some concluding remarks that might have given a kind of clue to his identity. The letter is too interesting to be lost, but the writer will understand why Mr. Foote cannot deal with it in any way at present.—EDITOR.]

There is nothing so indicative of fevered or of bad blood as the tendency to counsel the Almighty how he shall deal with his creatures.—*George Meredith.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

GREENWICH ETHICAL SOCIETY (Ethical Hall, Greenwich-road, S.E.): 7.15, J. T. Lloyd, "The First Ethical Movement Known to History."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 (noon), R. Le Carte and J. Darby. Newington Green: 12 (noon), S. J. Cook, "Secularism and Christianity." Finsbury Park: 3.30, S. J. Cook, "Man made God in his own image."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Common Sense."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 12 (noon), N. J. Evans, "Apocryphal Scriptures." The Green, Enfield: 7.30, J. Rowney, "The Christ Legend."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAIRSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): W. Heaford, 2.45, "Francisco Ferrer and the Escuela Moderna"; 6.30, "Impressions of Ferrer by One Who Knew Him."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Annual Business Meeting—Election of Office-Bearers, etc.; 6.30, "Mill and Owen"—Social Meeting.

Huddersfield Branch N. S. S. (No. 9 Room, Friendly and Trade Hall): Tuesday, at 8, Special Meeting.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "Sir Oliver Lodge and the Virgin Birth."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (above Tram Hotel, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting—Conference, etc.

OUTDOOR.

Huddersfield Branch N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8, G. T. Whitehead, "Some Results of Christian Teaching." Saturday, at 8, "Christianity and Socialism."

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Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

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